

Educational Adventures in the Dunes

2008-2009

*A Teachers' Planning Guide to
Environmental Education Programs
in the Indiana Dunes*



Partner of
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore



Indiana Dunes State Park

In addition to regular public programs such as those found on the monthly interpretive program schedule, the interpretive service offers private programming for schools, scouts, and other groups by reservation. The following information should help you plan an eventful and educational trip that is sure to leave an impression on your group.

Indiana Dunes State Park, established in 1925 as Indiana's fourth State Park, is located in Porter County. It consists of 2,182 acres of primitive, historical, and amazingly unique Hoosier landscape. Some of the most diverse flora and fauna of the Midwest reside in its sand dunes, beaches, marshes, swamps, savannas, and woodlands.

Three miles of beach afford spectacular views of Lake Michigan and offer swimming opportunities for those visiting during the summer season. More than 16 miles of hiking trails are available year-round and lead visitors through a variety of habitats. Trails range in difficulty from easy to rugged. Picnic areas are located throughout the park with tables, charcoal grills, toilet facilities, playground equipment, shelters, and play fields. Picnic shelters can be reserved for a fee by calling **1-866-6-CAMP-IN** or online at www.camp.in.gov. Otherwise, they are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Tent camping is available for organized youth groups under adult supervision.

The Interpretive Naturalist Service of the park has been introducing visitors to the dunes since 1931. Naturalists currently operate out of the Nature Center, where a spacious auditorium, exhibits, live animals, and wildlife observation area delight visitors year-round. The following programs can be reserved for your group. Additional programs on other topics can often be designed to meet your specific needs and the needs of your students. All times are for one class; groups with more than 20 are usually split up into more than one group. More information can be found by calling the Nature Center at **219-926-1390** or by visiting www.interpretiveservices.in.gov.

Sense-ational Journey

Goal: To increase student awareness of the dunes environment by encouraging utilization of multiple senses.

Students will learn to hone their senses and how to use them to their advantage. They will also discover how animals use senses to help them survive. Weather permitting, we will end with a short hike to the marsh.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: Preschool-2nd

Min./Max. group size: 10/variable

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park
Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

Who Goes Where?

Goal: To help students learn about park wildlife, habitats, and food chains.

Like pieces of a puzzle, many plants and animals come together to make one perfect picture. Students see this demonstrated by exploring the parts of various park habitats and food chains. Weather permitting, an exploratory hike through different habitats is included.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 1st-6th grade

Min./Max. group size: 10/variable

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park
Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group



NOTE: Reservations can be made between six months and two weeks of your planned visit. In lieu of paying a standard gate fee to enter the park, scheduled groups simply pay a \$1 per person program fee (paid staff and students eligible for free lunch are free). Self-guided brochures are available for teachers/group leaders who would like to expand their field trips or lead hikes on their own.

DNR

Indiana Department
of Natural Resources

Indiana Dunes State Park (at the north end of Indiana State Road 49)

Birds of the Indiana Dunes

Goal: To introduce students to the wonderful world of birds.

Students will be introduced to bird watching along with discovering what makes a bird a bird. Students will learn to identify birds through interactive activities. Emphasis on the importance of the dunes area to breeding and migratory birds is given. Weather permitting, we will end with a short hike.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 1st grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/variable

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

Cold-Blooded Animals

Goal: To help student recognize the difference between cold-blooded and warm-blooded animals

Students will learn the difference between amphibians and reptiles. Students will get a chance to look at different types of cold-blooded animals and discover what adaptations the animal has to survive. Weather permitting, we will end with a short hike.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 1st-6th grade

Min./Max. group size: 10/variable

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

Discover Wetlands

Goal: Students will discover the importance of both living and non-living components of a wetland.

Students will explore the depths of the wetland and identify macro-invertebrates to determine the quality of the water. Students will learn the importance of wetlands and discover what makes them such a great place for both plants and animals.

Program availability: Spring/Summer/Fall

Age group: 3rd grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/variable

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

Winter Alive

Goal: Students will experience and learn about the beauty and ecology of the dunes winter landscape.

Explore the beauty of the winter woods during a nature hike after viewing an indoor slide show focusing on animal adaptations. Learn how plants and animals adapt to winter. Weather permitting, we will end with a short hike.

Program availability: Fall/Winter

Age group: 1st grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/variable

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

A Walk Through Ecologic Time

Goal: To help students explore the concept of ecological succession and learn to identify different stages of succession based on the presence of different plants and animals.

This hike is based on Professor Henry Cowles' work with succession in the late 1800's at the dunes. Students will hike along, watching the landscape change before their eyes, from open beach to thick forests, and everything in between!

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 5th grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/variable

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Pavilion/Trail #3, 60-90 minutes per group

Defending Our Dunes

Goal: To help students understand the struggles of caring for our natural resources by participating in environmental projects and habitat restoration.

This program will focus on projects currently being worked on at the Indiana Dunes State Park. Students get hands-on field experience and gain perspective as a natural resource manager. Students will discover the challenges of maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

Program availability: Spring/Fall

Age group: 5th grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/50

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 60-90 minutes per group

Resource Management of the Indiana Dunes

Goal: To introduce students to the significance of natural resources management.

Natural areas such as those in the park take a lot to maintain their ecological integrity. Students discover the challenges of maintaining healthy ecosystems and the tools we use to do it during this illustrated program and activity. A tour of current projects near the Nature Center follows the program.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 5th grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/20

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

History of the Indiana Dunes State Park

Goal: Students will learn about how the Indiana Dunes State Park came to be, along with the learning about the story of the JD Marshall shipwreck. In addition, old frontier towns, French trading posts, and civil war guard towers will all be discussed. Many sites will be passed on a hike to Mt. Tom and back.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 4th grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/variable

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 60-90 minutes per group

Partners

FRIENDS OF *Indiana Dunes*

FRIENDS is a non-profit organization that sponsors a variety of park events and activities to enhance the understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the Indiana dunes.



Great Lakes Research
and Education Center



The Great Lakes Research and Education Center, funded through the National Park Service, facilitates research in 10 national parks within the Western Great Lakes Region and brings new knowledge about our natural and cultural resources to the eyes of the public.



The Dunes Learning Center serves as an education center and environmental learning laboratory on the site of the National Park Service's Camp Good Fellow.



Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was established in 1966 to "to preserve for the educational, inspirational, and recreational use of the public certain portions of the Indiana dunes."



LAKE COUNTY
SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Lake County Solid Waste Management District is a government entity created to develop a plan for the management of solid waste in Lake County, Indiana with an extensive environmental education program.



Recycling and Waste Reduction District of Porter County is a state-mandated agency devoted to reducing waste and improving the quality of life for Porter County residents. With this goal in mind, the District offers a variety of environmental education programs.



Save the Dunes Conservation Fund's mission is to protect and restore the Indiana dunes and surrounding natural resources through environmental research, legal safeguards, and strategic conservation initiatives.



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Dunes Learning Center
700 Howe Road
Chesterton, Indiana 46304

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